Mr. *Allin's*

Thanksgiving-SERMON,

Novemb. 8th, 1722.

BRITISH MUSEUM

What ſhall I Render!

A Thanksgiving SERMON

Preached at *Brooklin*,

Nov. 8th, 1722.

From PSALM CXVI. 12.

By **James Allin**, M. A.

And Paſtor of the Church there.

Gen. xxxii. 10. *I am not worthy of the leaſt of all the Mercies, and all the Truth, which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant*——

BOSTON, *N. E.*

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1722.

BRITISH MUSEUM

What ſhall I Render!

A THANKSGIVING-SERMON.

PSALM, CXVI. 12.

What ſhall I Render to the LORD for All His Benefits towards me?

THE Divine Goodneſs that Made the World, is the Foundation that Supports it. And as the Natural Light vaniſhes and leaves us in Obſcurity, when the Sun the Fountain of it, withdraws from us: ſo if GOD did withold or Deny His Influence; all things would preſently Relapſe into their firſt Nothing.

THAT GOD Rules and Governs; Maintains and Preſerves all Creatures in their ſeveral Forms and Orders; is Confeſſed by All, who acknowledge a Deity and Providence. This is an Idea of the ſame Age and Date in the minds of Men, with the very Notion of a GOD. Hence the Heathen

Heathen in their Difficulties, and hazardous Enterprizes; are uſed to fly to their Altars and fill their Temples with Sacrifices, to engage the Divine Aid and Protection.

GOD is emphatically called *the Preſerver of Men*; and we have as neceſſary, and continual Dependance upon Him, as the ſtreams upon the Fountain. We are all His Offspring; form'd by His Heavenly Skill; and He Preſerves by His Gracious Care, our frail Lives. He is the breath of our noſtrils; a Sun and Shield to His People. His Goodneſs is the Inexhauſtible Fountain, from whence all thoſe Refreſhing ſtreams flow, which are the Joy and Comfort of our Lives. And then, He is under no Obligation to Confer on us His Bleſſings; but He does all *Gratis*; nor has He any expectation of an anſwerable Return from us. He loads us with His Benefits, that He may render Himſelf dear to us; attract our hearts to Him; and that we may pay Him no more but the ſmall Acknowledgments of Love and Praiſe. Happy for us, if we fall in with this Deſign; for hereby we ſhall engage His Compaſſion and Care yet for us. But by our Ingratitude and Contempt of His Mercies, we may provoke Him to ſhut His hand againſt us, and lock up His Treaſures. Thus He Threatned *Iſrael* becauſe they did not acknowledge Him in their Proſperity and Increaſe, that He would take away their Corn, *&c.*

To Praiſe GOD then, is our Wiſdom and Advantage; 'tis a profitable Exerciſe, and moſt Delightful, to reflect upon the numberleſs Inſtances of His Mercy, and remember His Gracious

Works.

Works. This ſhould be our conſtant and daily Buſineſs. We ſhould Live a Life of Praiſe, that Work of Heaven. But this is what we are in a ſpecial manner call'd unto this Day by the Heads of our People, and what we now pretend to Appear before the LORD for. Let us be ſincere in it, and unfeignedly expreſs our Gratitude to Him for all His Benefits towards us; and ſo to offer Praiſe, as to glorify GOD.

THE Nation of the *Jews* had, as their ſtated *Faſts* by Divine Appointment; ſo their ſtated *Feaſts*; beſides their occaſional Days of Rejoycing. And Publick Thanksgiving Days have ſince, in every Age of the Church, been obſerved, if not by the immediate Appointment of GOD; by the Order of the Civil or Eccleſiaſtical Powers. Agreeable to this Laudable Cuſtom, and from a ſenſe of the Divine Goodneſs to our Land in the Year paſt, our Honourable Rulers have been pleaſed to ſet apart this Day for our Publick and Solemn Thanksgiving to Almighty GOD for His Benefits.

AND that we have now an Affecting ſenſe, a warm and lively Reſentment of His Favours; and offer Him our hearty Praiſes for them; is what He expects. And if perform'd, will be gratefull to Him, ſweet Melody in His Ears. But without this our moſt ſplendid Services, our loudeſt Praiſes, will have but the unagreeable noiſe of ſounding Braſs or a tinckling Cymbal. 'Tis the *Soul* that GOD looks at. The *manner* of the Sacrifice more than the *matter* of it. And if it is not offered with the Fire of holy Love, and from the Altar of a Thankful Heart; it will be

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but an offence to GOD, an abomination in His ſight, a loathſome ſtench in His Noſtrils. It concerns us then, as we would Pleaſe GOD, and Advantage our ſelves by this Day's Service; to examine the Temper of our Hearts, and engage them with our Tongues, the Organs of Praiſe, in this great Duty. We muſt with holy *David* call upon our Souls, and command the aſſiſtance of all our Powers in this Work.

WHAT ſhall I Render to the LORD for all His Benefits? The Inquiry ſpeaks a Soul ſenſible of it's vaſt Obligations to GOD for received Kindneſſes, and concern'd to make the Beſt Returns for them. Something, *David* knew, muſt be done for GOD, who had wrought Salvation and Deliverance for Him; not as a recompence, which he well knew himſelf uncapable of making; but to expreſs his Thankfulneſs. And he was ſincerely deſirous to do that which would be moſt acceptable to Him. The Affections of a grateful mind were working in him, and he was ſolicitous to make ſome ſuitable Acknowledgment. He Inquires, and Reſolves; *What ſhall I Render—— I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD*, &c. Thus we muſt offer the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, together with other Returns which *David* determined to make, for the Divine Benefits towards us.

DOCTRINE.

THE Benefits of GOD to a People, lay them under Indiſpenſible Obligations to be Concern'd to make him ſome proper and ſuitable Returns for them.

HERE

HERE I shall endeavour two things,

First, As the occasion of the Day leads me, To make some Reflections on the Gifts & Benefits of GOD unto us in the Year past. And then to show what the Returns are, GOD expects from us; and we are obliged to make Him, this Day for them.

I. I shall consider something of the Divine Benefits to our Land in the Year past, which are an Obligation upon us to make some proper Acknowledgments this Day.

THE Proclamation calls it *a Year Brightned with many Blessings.* And so we must this Day acknowledge, it has been, to the Glory of Divine Mercy; which is the Scource or Fountain of all that Good, a People enjoy. Thô indeed it has not been alike Plentiful with some other Years; And GOD has been, and now is, in some Respects, visiting us with His Righteous Judgments: Yet if we consider what and how many our Sins have been, How very mean and little our Returns for GOD's former Favours: We have cause to wonder that our Calamities have not been many more, & greater, and our Mercies much less. But our GOD is Good to the Evil, and Unthankful, Infinite in Mercy; otherwise we had been at this Day groaning out our sorrows; whereas we are now singing the Songs of Zion. Thô our Iniquities testify against us, our Backslidings have been many, and the cry of our Sins is loud for the awful Awards of *Justice* upon us; yet *Mercy* spares us, and has dealt favourably with our Land.

1. ONE, and indeed the chief and greatest of the Benefits of GOD unto us in the last Year, has

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been the continuance of His Gospel, and the Means of Grace.

THE Gospel is our Glory. That GOD's Tabernacle is among us, is our highest Honour. This has been the Beauty and Crown of the Year. It was *Israel's* peculiar Glory that GOD had Recorded His Name, and dwelt among them. They greatly valu'd themselves upon it; That He had chosen the Posterity of *Abraham* out of all the Nations of the Earth, to be His People, and that he had his Temple, his Altars, his Word, and Ordinances amongst them. And it is our Glory, that the Throne of CHRIST is with us, even the Place of His Sanctuary; and that He hath planted His Gospel in these Ends of the Earth. This makes our Land Pleasant, that it is *Immanuel's* Land where the LORD is Known, and His Name is Great.

SPIRITUAL Blessings are by far the most Valuable. The Gospel is our Richest Treasure. That we have CHRIST Revealed to us, Preach'd and Offered to us, with all the Rich & Unvaluable Purchases of His Death; is more & better to us, than if we had all the Riches of the *Indies*, or Stores and Treasures of the whole Earth. The Sacred Scriptures our Bibles, are a Treasure of Immense worth. That GOD has made known to us His Statutes, Inform'd us of His Will, and the way to Salvation, That He has Reveal'd to us a Happiness to be Enjoyed hereafter, a Glory to come. And that He has made many Gracious Promises of this unto us; is a Blessing vastly Superiour to that of all Temporal Riches and Honours.

THE Gospel deserves our highest Esteem next

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to our bleſſed LORD Himſelf its divine Author. Its called the Word of Life, in that it is the Glorious Inſtrument in the Hand of GOD of our Spiritual Life; and then Life and Immortality are brought to Light by it. The Goſpel diſcovers to us the way of our Reconciliation to GOD, and how we may come to enjoy Him, the Fountain of Happineſs; 'Tis the Glorious Light ſent down from Heaven to us to direct us there. Moſt unhappy is their condition upon whom this Sun of Righteouſneſs has not Riſen & Shone; our utmoſt Compaſſion is owing to ſuch. And our higheſt Love & Praiſe is due to GOD, for his diſtinguiſhing Grace herein to us, and for the continuance of His Goſpel; notwithſtanding all our contempt and abuſe of it, GOD might very juſtly have deprived us of this Light, as He has done to many other Places, becauſe we have Sinned under it. And then how deplorable had our caſe been? Certainly the Conſequence had been dreadful, the thick miſts of Ignorance & Error would have Invaded our Minds, and carried us blindfold to the Regions of Everlaſting darkneſs. Oh that we could be ſenſible of the Rich Grace of GOD herein to us! and ſo walk by this Light as that GOD may never be Provoked to take it away from us.

2. THAT GOD has put an End to a Contagious & Waſting *Sickneſs*, which was the laſt Year raging among us; and mercifully Healed our Land; is another great Benefit which we are this Day to make Him ſome Returns for.

HEALTH is a very great & valuable Bleſſing. The very firſt & chief in the Inventory of Temporal Benefits. For what are all our other En-

joyments without it? This gives them a Reliſh, and makes them Pleaſant. And the contrary, *ſcil. Sickneſs* is a ſore and awful Judgment; what we are to Deprecate, be humble under, Pray for the removal of, and heartily bleſs GOD if He takes it away.

How very Awful & Diſtreſſing was the State of *Iſrael* when GOD ſent the Peſtilence among them, and ſlew of them *Seventy Thouſand*: And how very lamentable has been the caſe of ſome parts of *Europe* in the Year paſt, that have been viſited with the *Plague*, that Sword of *the LORD*; which has ſlain vaſt Numbers of their Inhabitants, and laid Populous Cities almoſt waſte & deſolate. GOD that is Mighty has done Terrible things, and ſcattered the Proud in the Imagination of their Hearts. Bleſſed be His Name that He has not ſo dealt with *Great Britain*; but has thus far preſerved our Nation from the Peſtilence that walketh in Darkneſs, and the Deſtruction that waſteth at Noon-Day. Oh that He may ſtill ſave them!--

And how very Melancholy & Sorrowful was our condition in the laſt Year, when the Contagious & Mortal *Small-pox* was Raging among us, which has carried many Hundreds of our Friends and Neighbours from off the Stage of this World into ETERNITY. Death came up into our Windows, entred our Houſes, and cut off the Children from without, and the Young Men from the Streets. GOD ſwept us away with the Beſom of Deſtruction; we were conſumed by his Anger, and by his Wrath we were troubled. But He has been pleaſed at length to take away this *Sickneſs*, and to heal us. The deſtroying Angel has put up his Sword;

Sword, and ſtayed his Hand. GOD has mercifully delivered us from this Horrible Pit, & Miry Clay, and ſet our feet upon a Rock and eſtabliſhed our goings, and hath put a new Song into our Mouths this Day, even Praiſes to His Name, and has comforted us again after the time He has afflicted us. *Pſa.* 40. 2, 3. *Pſal.* 90. 15. He hath ſent forth his Word and Healed us, That I ſuppoſe no Inhabitant of our Land can now ſay I am Sick.

THIS is a Benefit we are to Acknowledge the Mercy of GOD in this Day, and to Praiſe Him for. Pſal. 103. *Bleſs the Lord O my ſoul, who healeth all our Diſeaſes.* ——

GOD might have laid His Hand more ſore and heavy upon us. Made the Mortality greater, and the *Sickneſs* of much longer continuance, have propagated it into other Towns, and made it a generalCalamity. But He has not dealt with us after our Sins; but of His great Mercy has ſaved us. And where the Malignant Influence had diſpenſed it ſelf, and threatned many Places, and ſome of 'em large & populous, its increaſe was happily prevented. GOD that ſits King upon the water Floods, and bounds the Raging Waves, ſaid to it, Thus far ſhalt thou go, and no farther. Surely then we are under indiſpenſible Obligations to make returns to Him this Day for ſo great a benefit: And it concerns us to inquire, What ſhall we Render?

3. THE Fruits of the Earth which GOD has given us the laſt Summer demand our Returns this Day.

GOD is the Father of all: The great Houſekeeper of the Univerſe, out of whoſe Stores we are fed: He gives us our daily Bread; and there

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is not the leaſt *Crumb* we have but we muſt acknowledge GOD in it: 'Tis He that gives it us.

GODS claim was juſt to all *Iſraels* Glory, and ſo it would certainly be to all ours. The Proſperity & Welfare of a Perſon or of a People is from GOD. Riches & Honours come of thee, ſaid *David*, and to Him he paid the juſt Tribute of Thanks. And becauſe ungrateful *Iſrael* did not conſider that their Corn, their Wine, and Oyl, their Gold and Silver were GOD's Bounty to them; He threatens them with taking theſe away.

GOD will be acknowledged, and it is moſt fit He ſhould, in all the Bleſſings of a People. As no Man can add, as our Saviour tells us, One Cubit to his Stature; or as ſome Read it, *One* * *Moment to his Life*: So neither can he contribute a Mite to his Eſtate, without GOD's Bleſſing ——.

'TIS GOD that gives us *Rain* from Heaven, and fruitful Seaſons, filling our hearts with Food and Gladneſs. 'Tis He that cauſes the Earth to yield to us her Increaſe, and the Trees their Fruit.

THE Summer paſt, it muſt be acknowledged, has not been equally fruitful with ſome others. Our Land being very unlike to *Ægypt*, and wanting the frequent return of Showers, which in the laſt Summer in a very unuſual manner have been denied it; ſome of the fruits of the Earth are much ſhortned, but in ſome reſpects, and the more important & neceſſary, there has been a ſufficient Harveſt. Our *Corn* was not taken away as it might have been, and as we fear'd it would be; but GOD has ſo far open'd the good Treaſures of Heaven, given *Rain* to us, and bleſſed the labours

* Dr. *Edw.* Ver. Red.

of

of our Hands, as that there is no lack of Bread. According to his Promiſe, He hath called for the *Corn*, and laid no Famine upon us, *Ezek.* 36. 29.

THE Summer before laſt we ſuffer'd by too *much Rain*, as we have done this by *too little*. And our Crops then, eſpecially the latter Harveſt, was very much diminiſhed; yet we were pretty comfortably carryed thro' the Year. And tho' the laſt Year has been attended with a very great *Drought*, whereby it has been in ſome meaſure, as the Prophet ſpeaks, The Vine-tree was dried up, the Figtree languiſhed, and the Trees of the field withered; the Beaſts groaned, and the Herds of Cattel were perplexed for want both of *Drink* and *Paſture*; yet GOD wonderfully preſerved the Corn, and cauſed it to grow almoſt without moiſture, that it has brought forth as is ſaid of the Land of *Canaan*, Sixty and an Hundred fold. The Crops this Year much exceeded thoſe the Year before; if not in the Number, yet in the goodneſs of the Grain, ſo that with GOD's bleſſing there will without doubt be a ſupply: Bread to the Eater, and food for Man, and alſo for the Beaſt.

4. OUR Salvations and Deliverances from, and Succeſſes againſt our *Eaſtern Enemies*, call for our Acknowledgments & Returns this Day.

WAR is juſtly accounted one of the greateſt Calamities of a People: Very ſad & diſmal have been the Effects of it; what overturnings and deſolations hath it made in the Earth, turning great and populous Cities into waſte & ruin'd heaps. Whole Countries have been made Deſolate by it, their high ways untrodden, the Travellers have walked thro' by-ways, and the Inhabitants of the Villages have ceaſed. How

How dismal was *Jerusalem*'s case, when Invaded by the *Roman* Army; what confusion were they thrown into, and at last, their whole City destroyed, as our Saviour had Predicted it should be. And how many and great Kingdoms were overthrown by *Alexander* and others? But it is endless to reckon up the Tragical Events of War. Well might the Prophet be put into a Consternation at the noise of it. Jer. 4. 19. *My Bowels, my Bowels, I am pained at my very heart, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the Trumpet, the Alarm of War.* Indeed it has never been with our Land, blessed be GOD for it, as it has been with many other Places. Yet we know enough of the unhappy effects of War, to make it a dread and terrour to us. And how much more we may know, before the War shall finish, we have lately engaged in, GOD only can say. But we hope for the best, and His appearance thus far for us; The Salvations He has afforded us; and our unexpected and unusual Successes against the Enemy, give us encouragement to hope; As they loudly demand our devout Acknowledgments, Adoration and Thanksgiving this Day. Blessed be GOD that hath not given us a prey to their Teeth; that we have occasion to raise that Note of Triumph, *Psal.* 9. 2,4,5,15. *I will sing praise to thy Name O Most High, for thou hast maintained my right & my cause. Thou satest in the Throne judging right, Thou hast rebuked the Heathen, Thou hast destroyed the wicked, Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever, The Heathen are sunk down*, &c. Thus it has been with respect to some of 'em, which without doubt, has shockt their hopes, & very much dampt their further designs against us.

In the first Opening the War, which used to give them the greatest advantage; and we have then sustain'd more loss in a few Weeks or Days, than in some Years afterwards. Their Success has been no ways answerable to what it has sometimes been, and we were ready to fear it would be. Surely this is a high Favour of GOD unto us, and what strongly obliges us to make Him some proper and suitable Acknowledgments this Day. And then that our Sea-coasts have been in so great a measure guarded from the bloody *Pirates*, is what we are this Day to observe to the Honour of the LORD on High, who is Mightier than the Noise of many Waters, and who is the Confidence of all the Ends of the Earth, and of them that are afar off upon the Sea.

Thus hath the LORD our GOD been with us, Blessed & Prosper'd us in the Year past, Kept us at Home and Abroad, in Perils by Sea, and Land: He hath blessed us in our Merchandize, Husbandry and Fishery: He hath blessed our *Zebulun* in his Out-goings, and *Issachar* in his Tents. Oh that He may yet be with us and bless us; That His Salvations may always be nigh unto us, and much of His Glory dwell in our Land!

5. The continuance of Our Civil Privileges, and the good Government GOD in His Providence hath ordained for us, both respecting our KING at Home, and the Powers Immediately over us; is another Benefit we are this Day to acknowledge, and make proper Returns to Him for.

GOD is the Supreme LORD, and Governour of the World. The Reins of Universal Dominion are in His Hands; by Him Kings Rule: And His

Wiſdom and Goodneſs muſt Particularly be acknowledged in the Authority that He hath placed over us, in the Imperial Crown of Government at Home with is our Honour and Joy.

WISE & Pious Rulers are to be eſtimated as great Bleſſings to a People: They are under GOD, their Defence & Glory. And it is becauſe GOD loves a People that He conſtitutes ſuch to Rule over them. Such a Prince we muſt acknowledge this Day to the Honour of GOD is Exalted to the *Britiſh* Throne; A Prince of very Uncommon Prudence, Lenity and Goodneſs; One that very much anſwers the character of a Nurſing Father to GOD's *Iſrael*; which as it adds very much to the comfort of our Lives; ſo it ſhould to the joy of our Solemnities this Day. We are to Praiſe GOD for him, and that his Throne has been thus far Eſtabliſh'd, notwithſtanding the repeated Attempts of his Enemies to overthrow it; They have Imagin'd a vain thing: All their Secret Plots and Conſpiracies againſt the LORD's Anointed, to ſhake off his eaſy Yoke, and to pluck the Crown from his Head, and ſet it upon another's, to introduce the *Bramble* to bear Rule inſtead of the *Olive-tree*; have been happily diſcovered and defeated. He that ſits King in *Zion*, hath Laughed at them, the LORD hath had them in Deriſion. May GOD yet encompaſs Him with His Tender Mercys, and make the Crown long to Flouriſh upon his Head. And may his Faithful Services for GOD and his People, be at laſt Recompenſed with Diſtinguiſhing Honours in the Heavenly World.

AND is it not a ſmile of Heaven upon us, a high

high Favour to our Land, and what we have cauſe to Rejoice in this Day, that the Powers immediately over us, are Miniſters of GOD for good unto us: That our * Officers are Peace, and our Exactors Righteouſneſs; That there is a ‖ Spirit of Wiſdom & Underſtanding in them, a Spirit of Counſel & of Might, a Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the LORD; and that they ſincerely deſire & endeavour the good of this People.

IN our preſent Conſtitution, and our preſent Government, we are happy, if we can but think ſo; much more ſo than we have reaſon to think an Alteration will make us: And if there be any among us that are given to Change, we have no cauſe to meddle with 'em.

BUT are there not thoſe, to their ſhame be it ſpoken, that Fault the preſent Miniſtry and Managements; that Revile, Arraign & Condemn the Rulers of GOD's People: Reſtleſs Spirits, and that endeavour to make all about 'em ſo, by ſowing the evil ſeeds of Diſcord, Faction & Sedition, which above all things are detrimental to the State, Wounding and Deſtructive to the Body Politick. But let ſuch Sons of Wickedneſs remember that to Speak evil of Dignities is a fault of a black Character in the Word of GOD. And to contemn and ſlight Rulers, is to deſpiſe GOD Himſelf; and therefore they may not think to eſcape Puniſhment.

BLESSED be GOD for it, we have a Governour that has the Tender Regards of a Father for us, that has ever expreſs'd and manifeſted Love to us, and a Readineſs to ſerve us in our beſt Intereſts.---

* Iſai 60. 17. ‖ 11. 3

We have a Magiſtracy who have always endeavoured to anſwer the high Character they bear of Gods, to this People. That maintain the cauſe of the Poor and Fatherleſs, and do Juſtice to the Afflicted & Needy, and are a terror only to Evil-Doers.

And then is it not a valuable Priviledge, that our Rulers, the moſt of them, are of our own Electing. That we may chuſe Men, from out of all the Tribes of our People to take us by the Hand and lead us; Men that Fear GOD, and are Loyal to the King; and that have underſtanding of the Times, to know what *Iſrael* ought to do, 1 *Chron.* 12. 32.

These things we are to acknowledge this Day to the Glory of GOD the Father, & of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who hath enriched us with theſe Bleſſings. And let us Pray GOD long to continue them unto us. Oh that our Goodneſs in theſe Reſpects may not be as the Morning Cloud, and the early dew that ſoon paſs away.

6. And Finally, Our Perſonal Bleſſings which GOD of His Rich Goodneſs hath beſtowed upon us in the laſt Year, ſhould make us concern'd and Inquire, What ſhall I Render to Him? Our Particular & Perſonal Bleſſings, how many are they, a vaſt ſum have the Mercies of GOD been unto us Who of us can reckon up the Inſtances of the Divine Care and Bounty to him in the laſt Year; yea in any One Week or Day of it. How many and how Great Evils hath GOD by the Guardianſhip & Miniſtration of His Angels ſaved us from? How many times hath His Merciful Hand Pluck't us as Brands out of the Burning?

And

And how Numerous & Valuable have been His Benefits unto us? His Mercies have been Renewed upon us every Morning, and every Moment.

And then the Bleſſings He hath beſtowed upon our Relations & Friends which we are to account as partly given to our ſelves, we are to acknowledge the Kindneſs & Love of GOD in this Day.

These, together with our own, we Reflect on with Comfort, and ſhould do with Love and Gratitude to the GOD & Giver of 'em. Thus I have conſidered the firſt General Head; Namely, ſomething of the Gifts & Benefits of GOD unto us in the Year paſt, which are an Obligation upon us to make Him ſome proper Acknowledgments this Day. I proceed to the Second.

II. *WHAT are the Returns which we are obliged this Day to make to GOD our Great Benefactor and Saviour, for His Bleſſings?*

When GOD Bleſſeth a People, He expects that they make Him ſome ſuitable Acknowledgments; and it becomes a People to be concern'd and inquire with holy *David*, after GOD in anſwer to his Prayer, had granted him ſome eminent Deliverances, What ſhall I Render? ——

When the *Iſraelitiſh* State, from that of a contemptible and forlorn Infant, was by the divine Care and Bounty, become Beautiful & Renowned; GOD expected that they ſhould have acknowledged Him in it, made Him the Returns of Love, Gratitude & Service, and employ'd all his Gifts to the Honour of His Name: And when they made a contrary improvement of them, He was exceeding-

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ly Provoked ; upbraided their vile Ingratitude, and awfully puniſh'd it. The like Treatment we may look for, if we prove alike Ungrateful and Rebellious. It highly concerns us then as we would avoid the imputation of being an Ungrateful People, and its heavy & diſmal Conſequents, to reflect on the many divine Benefits to us, and offer up our Publick and hearty Thanks for them ; To bleſs the Name of the LORD for His goodneſs, to exalt Him in the Congregation of the People, and Praiſe Him in our Aſſemblies. It was *David's* reſolution to praiſe Him for His Benefits, together with a Profeſſion of His Love to him, and Promiſe of Obedience.———.

1. WE are Obliged to make the Returns of *Praiſe* & *Thanksgiving* to GOD for All His Benefits. To Praiſe GOD for His Peerleſs Excellencies & Benefits ; is the indiſpenſible Duty of Rational Creatures. To this End were they formed, and are they preſerved. To deny GOD this ſmall Tribute then, is to pervert the intention of our Creation, and of all His Bleſſings. Natural, as well as Divine Light, the written Word, dictates to us our Neceſſity & Obligation to a Thankful Acknowledgment of the Mercies freely given us of GOD. So that to neglect this Duty, is not only to bid defiance to Religion, to caſt contempt upon the many plain & poſitive Commands of GOD ; but alſo to violate the laws of Reaſon and Conſcience. 'Tis the Univerſal acknowledgment of Mankind, that all are bound to Praiſe their Benefactors. The Heathen were ſo ſenſible of their obligation herein, that they erected Monuments of *Gratitude* to them from whom

whom they had receiv'd any ſpecial *Kindneſs*. Such was the Altar at *Athens* dedicated to the *Unknown God*, i. e. to ſome *Uncertain Benefactor*. And an Ungrateful Perſon was liable to Puniſhment, both by the *Athenian* and *Perſian* Law.

SINCE all our Bleſſings are the Free Gifts of Heaven, and we can lay no juſt claim to any One of them; we can do no leſs than Acknowledge them, to the Praiſe and Honour of GOD. And not to Aſcribe the Praiſe of all our Mercies to Him, is in effect, to diſown our dependence upon Him, and to deny Him to be the giver of them; and ſo to fruſtrate the great deſign of His goodneſs, which is to lead us to Repentance, to excite us to vertue, and engage our Hearts to Him.

THERE is a very great & pleaſant Variety in the Gifts of GOD unto us; and they all call upon us to Praiſe Him; this is the demand of every Mercy; and the neglect of it, will be very Provoking to Him. *Spiritual* Bleſſings eſpecially require this Return from us; theſe are of a Superiour Nature, and in them the Glory of Divine Goodneſs is eſpecially Illuſtrious. Infinite Praiſe is due to GOD for providing us a Saviour, to deliver us from Hell, the deſert of Sin; and for all the rich Benefits that flow down to us from the Death of CHRIST. Hereby the Fountain of divine Mercy is opened, from whence we derive all the Bleſſings and Comforts of our Lives.

2. *LOVE* to GOD for His Benefits, is another Return, which we are oblig'd to make to GOD. When GOD cauſes the Sun of Proſperity to ſhine upon a People, and waters them with ſhowers of Bleſſings; it is certainly an Obligation upon them

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to *Love* Him; and by the neglect of this, they juſtly forfeit His Favours. As it would be Unnatural & Sordid in a Child, nouriſh'd & brought up at the Breaſts of its Mother; and therefore to whom the Higheſt Affection is due; to have but an indifference for her, or rather an Averſion: ſo for a People to whom GOD hath ſhown very ſpecial Favours, that have been nouriſh'd at the Breaſt of His Providence, and loaded with His Benefits to grow forgetful of Him, or to make Him the Returns of Evil, or Hatred, inſtead of Love; is the moſt diſingenious and baſe that can be, and enough one would think, to Provoke a Merciful GOD to Retract His Favours, and ſhut His Hand.

As we Love our Natural Parents, who are but the ſecond Cauſes of our Being. And as we Love our Benefactors, who are but the Inſtruments in GOD's hand of our Well-being; ſo, and much more are we obliged to Love GOD, from whoſe Rich Stores all our Bleſſings come; who beſtows upon us all we have, and is under no Obligation to do any thing for us, and has no deſign in it, but our Good. He Confers His Bleſſings that He may render Himſelf Dear to us, they come on this Errand. The voice of all is that we Love the LORD; but our Ears are deaf, our Hearts are frozen. His Gifts prove His Rivals in our Hearts, and we place that Love upon them, which is His Due; but how unworthy is this, and how unreaſonable, and unjuſt, and wherein will it Terminate?

THE warm Beams continually darted down upon us from this Sun, ſhou'd thaw our congealed

Affections

Affections in love to Him. As the Load-ſtone turns the needle by it's attractive Influence and keeps it fixt to it ſelf: ſo the Divine Love ſhould have a Transforming Efficacy upon our hearts, and draw them off from all other Objects; and fix them upon GOD entirely and for ever.

3. THE Benefits of GOD unto us, are an Obligation upon us *to Devote our ſelves to Him* in a ſettled Regular courſe of *Subjection* and *Obedience*.

THIS Holy *David* was apprehenſive of, and therefore Profeſſes, *v.* 16 *O Lord, truly I am thy ſervant, I am thy ſervant,* —— *thou haſt looſed my Bonds.* And Reſolves *v.* 13. I will walk before thee in the Land of the Living. The Relation of Creatures we ſtand in to GOD, gives Him a Right to Command us to what Services He will, and it is our Duty to engage in the Task He ſets us, how ſeemingly Difficult ſoever, with a reſigned and chearfull Spirit, and without Delay. As we are to chooſe GOD for our chief Good for our Everlaſting Portion; and to fix all our Hopes, Deſires and Love upon Him; ſo we muſt ſubmit to Him as our higheſt LORD, and manage at all times under the awful Senſe of His Authority over us, and of His all-ſeeing Eye upon us. And as the Law of GOD muſt always be the Rule we act by, our Compaſs to direct our Courſe thrô the dangerous Voyage of this World; ſo His Glory muſt be our ultimate and governing Deſign in all we do. We were not made for our ſelves, nor ſhould we Live to our ſelves, but to Him that made us, and Glorify Him with our *Bodies* and *Spirits*, ſeeing they are both His.

We must make a Practical Acknowledgment of GOD's Benefits to us. In this way we must express our Gratitude for them, and in this it is most evident. It is certainly a vain Pretence that we are suitably affected with the Mercies of GOD, and thankful for them; if we are not Influenced by them to Discard even our most beloved and favourite Lusts; and to Live a Religious and Holy Life. A Subject certainly manifests His Loyalty to his Prince more by a strict Observance of His Laws, than by all his fair Words and Speeches. When our Lips and Lives Harmonize in the Praises of GOD; it is a certain Indication of our Sincerity, and that we have a proper Resentment of His Blessings.

The Creatures below us, in their several Degrees of subordination, serve to the Honour of their Creator, and on whom they Depend: And thus should *Men* especially be employed, to whom the Divine Benefits have been many more and greater; and who understands his Obligations for them. And then it is both the Honour and Happiness of a Person or People, to serve GOD. The Advantage of Religion is vast & surprizing; the Gains of Godliness are Infinite. If we are sincerely Devoted to serve GOD here on Earth, He will Crown our Services, (thô in themselves imperfect and worthless) not with *Earthly* Blessings only, but with the Happiness and Glory of *Heaven*.

This is the way to be Blessed in this World, and in the World to come. And when Death calls us off from our Services here; it will transmit our Souls to Heaven, and we shall for ever share

ſhare in all the Dignities and Pleaſures of that Court.

THUS we are to Acknowledge the Benefits of GOD unto us, by a *Dutiful Thanksgiving*; by our *Supreme Love*, and *faithful Services*: and I might add by our *Charity and Mercy to others*. Thus the Devout *Jews* on their Publick Thanksgivings, were careful to ſend Portions to them for whom nothing was Prepared, *Neh.* 8. 10. *Eſth.* 9. 22. Whoſe *Example* ſhould Influence us to do the like. But eſpecially we are obliged as far as our Abilities will allow, to *Imitate* GOD in a Diffuſive Goodneſs. The Divine Charity has a very extenſive Reach, and includes all Perſons within the Line of it's Care; a Pattern for us to Commiſerate the Calamitys of others, and contribute to their Relief, as far as we are able. This, if regularly perform'd, will be an acceptable Return to our Great Benefactor. GOD will be well Pleaſed with it, and highly Recompence it.

THESE are the Returns we are to make to GOD for His Bleſſings, and however mean and little in themſelves; and can't at all advantage the Almighty; yet GOD knows, they are the very Beſt we have, and indeed all that He requires of us; and if we are ſincere and hearty in 'em, He will accept our Offering, and account Himſelf Honoured: For He has ſaid, He that offers Praiſe, Glorifieth Him, and the Living Sacrifice of a thankful Heart, and obedient Life, is acceptable to Him, beyond the Dead one of fatted Beaſts.

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LET us then attend the Buſineſs of This Day, and aſcribe Praiſes to our GOD, the Praiſe of all our Salvations and Deliverances, and of all our Mercies. Thô the Praiſes of Angels, thoſe flames of Love wait on Him, & they ſtand ready about His Throne, with their Obedient & Holy Services; yet He will not diſdain *ours*, if they be ſincere, and flow from Hearts duly ſenſible and affected with His Bleſſings. Let us then Reſolve with *David*, *to take the Cup of Salvation, and call on the Name of the LORD*; to offer to Him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving. And that we will walk before Him in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all the Days of our Lives. Let His many Benefits to us, attract our hearts to *Him*. Let us make Him the Return of our moſt ardent *Affection*, render up our *Hearts* entire to Him, who doth juſtly Demand, and highly deſerve them. And let us this Day renew the Dedication of our ſelves to Him, our ſolemn Covenant with Him; and reſolve upon a ſteady courſe of Obedience to Him, and that from henceforth we will make Religion our Buſineſs; and His Glory our Ruling Deſign. We can do no leſs, than with our utmoſt endeavours to ſerve *His* Intereſts; ſince He hath ſo much ſerved *Ours*. Let us then avouch the LORD this Day to be our GOD, and that we will walk after His Laws, and employ all our Powers in all Dutiful Regards to Him. Let us ſerve Him in the very beſt manner we can, with a Voluntary, Conſtant and the moſt exact

exact Obedience. In this Method, and no other, ſhall we engage His Preſence yet with us, His Care & Bounty to us, He will then beſtow upon us, not only *Temporal*, but *Eternal* Bleſſings.

PRAISE is the work of Heaven, the employment of *Angels*; they ſing a *New Song* before the Throne. The Saints are joyful in Glory, the High Praiſes of GOD are in their Hearts and Mouths; and they ſhould be in our Hearts. Let us then joyn that noble Choir in the Aſcriptions of Bleſſing, Glory & Thanksgiving to GOD, and to the Lamb. Let us be Thankful to the LORD, and Bleſs His Name for all His Gifts to our Land, and to our Selves.

THERE are none of us, (how ſad & ſorrowful ſoever, our Condition has been in the Year paſt) but we have many Bleſſings to give a Merciful GOD Thanks for, and He expects that we acknowledge it this Day, to the Praiſe of His Rich Grace. Let us then conſider, as we can, His Benefits unto us, wherein He hath Bleſſed & Proſpered us; The Death's and Dangers He hath ſaved us from, and the whole Store and Treaſure of corporeal Bleſſings He hath heaped upon us, and give Him the deſerved Praiſe of them.

BUT eſpecially let us call to mind the *Spiritual* Bleſſings He hath vouchſafed us, what He hath done for our Souls. And if GOD, who is ready to forgive, has Pardoned our many Sins, whereby we are not only exempted from all Obligation to ſuffer the Curſes of the Law, and the Pains of Hell; but are become Intereſted in His Favour, and Receiv'd into the near Relation of Children to Him, and ſo have a Right to the moſt valuable

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Inheritance, this is a High favour, a great and Inestimable Blessing, which we have Infinite cause to Acknowledge to Him in Love & Thankfulness this Day, and every Day of our Lives. If there has been a saving change wrought in us by the Holy Spirit in the Ministry of the word; or by His Providences in the Year past; If we have experienc'd what it is to be Born again, have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and are called into the Love and Fellowship of CHRIST; We are this Day to bow our knees before GOD in Thankful Acknowledgments of His undeserved and distinguishing Mercy herein to us. But if we have remained another Year in an Unconverted Estate, and have the guilt of all our Sins lying heavy upon us; Oh how sad & deplorable is our case! Let us Tremble at the thought. And without a Moments delay, fall down before GOD in humble Confessions, and earnest Supplications for His Mercy thrô the Merits of a Compassionate Redeemer. Let us not dare to bring our *Old Sins* into the *New Year*; this will be most unhappy for us. But let us be advised to a speedy Repentance for them, and Amendment of our Lives—— *To Day while it is called to Day*; for we know not what may be the Event of another Year or Day.

AND let us Thank GOD, as for our Personal Benefits, so for all His Mercies to our *Land*; and also to our KING & *Nation*. Let us be humbled before GOD for all the *Sins* of our Land. Sigh and Cry for the Abominations that are committed among us. And let us Pray that the Wickedness of

of the Wicked may come to an End, that all Iniquity may ſtop her Mouth. Let us Reſolve *for* GOD, and *againſt* Sin. Purify our Hearts, Put away the Evil of our doings from before His Eyes, and learn to do well. Seek Judgment, Relieve the Oppreſſed, Judge the Fatherleſs, and Plead for the Widow.—— If we are willing and obedient, we ſhall eat the good of the Land, and GOD will Bleſs the enſuing Year, and crown it with His Goodneſs, and make all His Paths drop fatneſs; Yea, He will be with us and keep us in all the way that we go, during our Pilgrimage in this World, and give us Bread to Eat, and Raiment to put on; and will at laſt bring us all to His Houſe in Peace.

AND now Bleſſed be the LORD GOD *of Iſrael from Everlaſting to Everlaſting; And let all the People ſay, Amen. Hallelujah,* Pſal. 106. ult.

FINIS.

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